

Monday, October 25, 2004

Flu shot shortage hits Indiana, nation

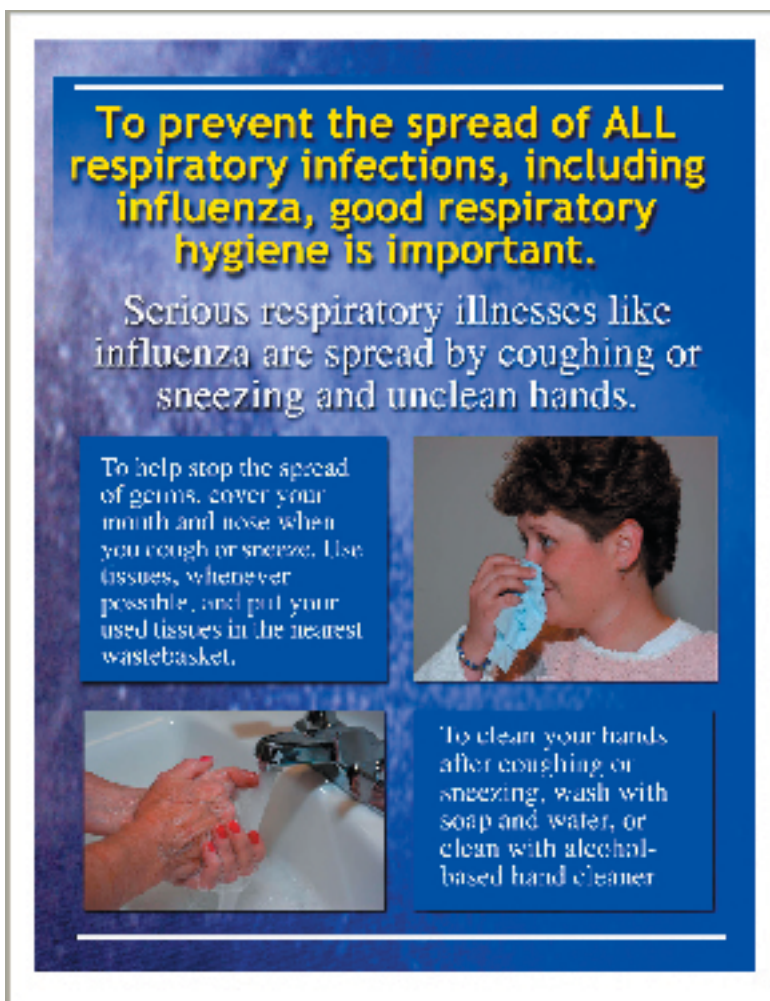
On October 5, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced that British regulators had suspended Chiron's license to manufacture the influenza vaccine at its Liverpool, England facility.

The three-month suspension prevents Chiron from releasing the flu vaccine this flu season, and approximately 50 million doses of the flu vaccination will not be available to the United States.

Below, Shawn Richards, ISDH respiratory epidemiologist, answers questions about the flu shot situation.

Question: Why is there a flu shot shortage?

Answer: Because of Chiron's license being suspended, there is now only one company, Aventis, that provides the injectible flu vaccine in the United States. Chiron was supposed to make almost half of the nation's total influenza vaccine supply. MedImmune is manufacturing the FluMist, but it is only



This poster explaining good respiratory hygiene is available on the State Department of Health's Web site. The public is encouraged to display it in schools and in the workplace. [Click here](#) to view a printable version.

indicated for healthy individuals between the ages of 5-49, and there are only around 2 million doses.

Q: Why can't another company just make more doses?

A: It takes about nine months to "grow" the viral flu strains for the flu vaccine. Therefore, there isn't enough time to make more for this season.

Vaccine manufacturers must order special chickens to make the flu vaccine one year in advance. These chickens will need to lay approximately 90 million eggs to make enough flu vaccine for one flu season.

Each egg produces one to three doses of the flu shot.

Q: The CDC has issued a priority list of who should get a flu shot. Who is on that list, and why was it developed?

A: On October 5, the CDC announced flu shot priority groups so that those at a greater risk of hospitalization, or death from the flu would get the shots first.

The list includes:

- ◆ All children aged 6-23 months
- ◆ Adults aged 65 years and older
- ◆ Persons aged 2-64 years with underlying chronic medical conditions
- ◆ All women who will be pregnant during influenza season.
- ◆ Residents of nursing homes and long-term care facilities
- ◆ Children 6 months – 18 years of age on chronic aspirin therapy
- ◆ Health-care workers with direct patient care
- ◆ Out-of-home caregivers and household contacts of children aged less than 6 months.

(See FLU- Page 4)

Three recognized with STAR awards

Three Indiana State Department of Health employees were honored this month by their peers with STAR Awards.



Lori Mathews and Dr. Wilson.

State Health Commissioner Greg Wilson, M.D., presented the awards that recognized outstanding employees for **S**ervice, **T**eamwork, **A**ttitude, & **R**espect.

Lori Mathews, HIV/STD, won the STAR Award for the labor trades and crafts category.

Lori was praised for her planning and implementation of the HIV/STD "Unity" conference.

"She was encouraging, diligent, supportive, and professional during the entire process," noted one nominee. "She represented the agency and the division with unbelievable poise throughout the process."

Denise Wright, Sanitary Engineering, received the STAR Award for the professional, administrative, and technological category. Denise received several nominations for her assistance to local health departments.

"She has time and again demonstrated knowledge and assistance in all areas of on-site sewage disposal," wrote one nominee. She was applauded for her dedication to her position, and for making herself available after hours,

when needed.

Norma Boykin, Children's Special Health Care, won the supervisor, manager, executive staff category STAR Award. Norma was commended for always being caring, approachable, profes-



Dr. Wilson and Norma Boykin.

sional, fair, and willing to go the extra mile to get the job done. As a supervisor in a department that has undergone many changes, Norma was applauded for constantly encouraging and providing positive leadership to her staff.

Noted one nominee, "Norma has a positive attitude on a daily basis even during stressful or challenging times."



Denise Wright and Dr. Wilson.

Other **STAR** nominees include:

COMOT/Clerical

Nirmala Metta, Maternal and Child Health; Penny Screiber, Finance; and Jannifer Smiley, Long Term Care

Pat-Professional

Phil Beck, Finance; Donna Browder, ITS; Todd Cox, Maternal and Child Health; Kham Hanlotxomphou, Children's Special Health Care; Elizabeth Hibler, Public Health Preparedness; Lisa McColly, Long

Term Care; Joan Raber, Acute Care; Diana Sidell, Long Term Care; Stephanie Toomey, Long Term Care; and Ken Ziegler, Acute Care.

ESM-Supervisor/Executive

Shaleen Johnson, Vital Statistics; Sue Percifield, Chronic/Communicable Disease; Pam Pontones, Epidemiology Resource Center; Kimberly Rief, Maternal and Child Health; Ron Sanderson, Microbiology Labs; and Susann Stahl, Finance.

Photos by Dan Axler



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Julie Fletcher, Editor
Telephone (317) 234-2817
Fax (317) 233-7873
jfletche@isdh.state.in.us
<http://www.statehealth.IN.gov>
Margaret Joseph, Director of Public Affairs

Gregory A. Wilson, M.D.
State Health Commissioner

USDA honors staff for quick response to meat recall

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) recently awarded several Indiana State Department of Health employees a certificate of appreciation for their "outstanding teamwork" during a meat recall last December in the Hendricks County area.

USDA Enforcement Investigations and Analysis Officer Alan Jackson said members of Food Protection staff and Chemistry and Microbiology Labs staff worked efficiently with the USDA and the county to handle the situation.

"There were no adverse health consequences because of this recall," he said. "The American public benefits when we all work together," he said.

Scott Gilliam, Food Protection manager, said because of the quick response to the recall, most of the meat was kept out of the market.



Photo by Dan Axler

ISDH staff honored by the USDA for their work during a meat recall in Hendricks County include (front, l to r): Robert Liner, M.D., Ph.D.; Patricia McMurray, Labs; Allen Davidson, Labs; Scott Gilliam, Food Protection; and State Health Commissioner Greg Wilson, M.D. (Back, l to r): Heather Vaughn, Food Protection; James Kirkman, Labs; Shirley Vargas, Food Protection; Darrell Rose, Labs; Alan Johnson, USDA; and Reginald Bigham, USDA.

Often times, he said, that is not the case, and the product has already been shipped or even consumed.

"It is nice to be recognized by others for work that you do and it was very kind of the USDA to

(recognize) us," said Gilliam.

State Health Commissioner Greg Wilson, M.D., who was present at the Oct. 7 ceremony, said, "This is a great representation of all of the hard work you do, and your professionalism."

Conference aims to educate diabetics, family members

Topics ranging from oral health, to foot care, to glucose meters will be discussed at the "Too Sweet for Your Own Good" diabetes management conference November 13 at the Light of the World Christian Church in Indianapolis.

As one of several sponsors, the Office of Minority Health will participate in the free conference, which is geared toward the high-risk minority population.

"We welcome everyone to this conference, but the African-American community, and minorities in general, are specifically at

high risk for diabetes," explained Martha Bonds, Office of Minority Health. "We also want to educate family members of those with diabetes because it truly is a family lifestyle change, and a family affair."

Among the breakout session topics are: "This Little Piggy: Caring for Your Feet," "Monitoring for Management," and "Girlfriend, It's all About You!" General sessions cover the topics of eye site and kidney function, and the keynote speaker will discuss diabetes health in general.

Participants will receive educa-

tion materials, a diabetes monitor, foot screenings, and lunch.

Conference sponsors include Bayer HealthCare, Diagnostics Division; Citizens Health Center; the Diabetes Control Program, Indiana State Department of Health; Marion County Health Department; Minority Health Coalition of Marion County; Novo Nordisk Pharmaceuticals, Inc.; and the Office of Minority Health, Indiana State Department of Health.

For more information, or to register, contact the [Office of Minority Health](#) at 317-233-7943. Registration deadline is October 29.

Flu

(continued from page 1)

Q: When will the Indiana State Department of health receive more vaccine?

A: The ISDH purchases flu vaccine and distributes it to local health departments and to health-care providers that participate in the Vaccine for Children Program. That program provides vaccine to children under 19 years of age who are uninsured, or who are insured through Medicaid.

The CDC has indicated that the needs of that program will be met, but has not yet indicated exactly how much vaccine will be sent to the ISDH, or when it will arrive. The agency will also be able to order a small amount of FluMist vaccine, which will be made available to local health departments for a limited time and for a limited number of doses.

Q: Where can I find more information on flu shot clinics?

A: We recommend that anyone

interested in getting a flu shot first contact his/her primary care physician to see if the shots are available. Information is from the Indiana Family Helpline, at 1-800-433-0746.

Q: Why is the flu shot effective, and how does it protect me?

A: A flu shot is an inactive virus being injected into your system. This virus causes your body to produce antibodies, telling your system that you have already had the virus. If you were to get the flu, your body would recognize it, and fight it without you being sick. A flu shot is 70 - 90 percent effective in normal, healthy people. It is 50 percent effective for those on the priority list.

Q: Why is it only 50 percent effective for those on the priority list?

A: The immune and body systems in the priority group are already trying to make up for the bodies illness/disease on an everyday basis. Therefore, their

bodies are working harder than an individual that does not have a disease/illness. Hence, a person in the high priority group's immunity is low, and their bodies aren't as effective in fighting off other illnesses.

Q: If I don't get a flu shot, how can I protect myself?

A: If you are sick, stay home! Children who are sick should be kept home, too.

Use good handwashing practices, and cover your nose when you cough or sneeze.

If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve. Put your used tissue in the wastebasket.

Clean your hands after coughing or sneezing with soap and water, or with alcohol-base cleaner.

Persons over age 65 who are unable to get a flu shot are encouraged to get a pneumococcal shot because pneumonia is the most likely possible complication from influenza.

LHDs encouraged to attend healthy homes conference

Local health departments are invited to attend a meeting regarding Medicaid reimbursement to local health departments on November 9 in Indianapolis.

The session is part of the Indiana Lead-Safe and Healthy Homes Conference scheduled for November 9 and 10 at the Indianapolis Marten House. The panel will discuss Medicaid reimbursement for case management of children with elevated blood lead levels and environmental investigations of their homes.

According to Maria Larson, with ISDH Lead Poisoning Prevention Program, the session will be an opportunity to discuss the best methodology the State Department of Health and local health departments can establish for the reimbursement process.

"The State Department of Health will submit claims to Medicaid on behalf of the local health departments," said Larson. "Because of that, the local health departments will need to provide us with sufficient documentation to meet the Medicaid requirements for billing."

The conference itself will focus on prevention of lead poisoning. Prevention is key because the damage caused by lead poisoning is entirely preventable, explained Larson. The conference will highlight primary prevention through identifying homes for lead hazards and other contaminants, and making these homes healthy. Dr. Mary Jean Brown, chief of the Lead Poisoning Prevention Branch at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta will discuss the CDC's lead poisoning prevention

program.

"Lead poisoning is still one of Indiana's main environmental health problems for children," Larson said of the importance of the conference. "The information gathered at this conference will allow local health departments and others to understand the challenges, as well as their roles within the implementation of the lead elimination plan."

Indiana's Childhood Lead Poisoning Elimination Plan is available on the ISDH Web site.

Participants can register for the conference by contacting Tom Neltner, Improving Kids' Environment at neltner@ikecoalition.org.

The cost is \$150 for the first person in an organization, and \$125 for each additional person. Scholarships may be available.